



I. Akimushkin

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MALYSH PUBLISHERS 1979

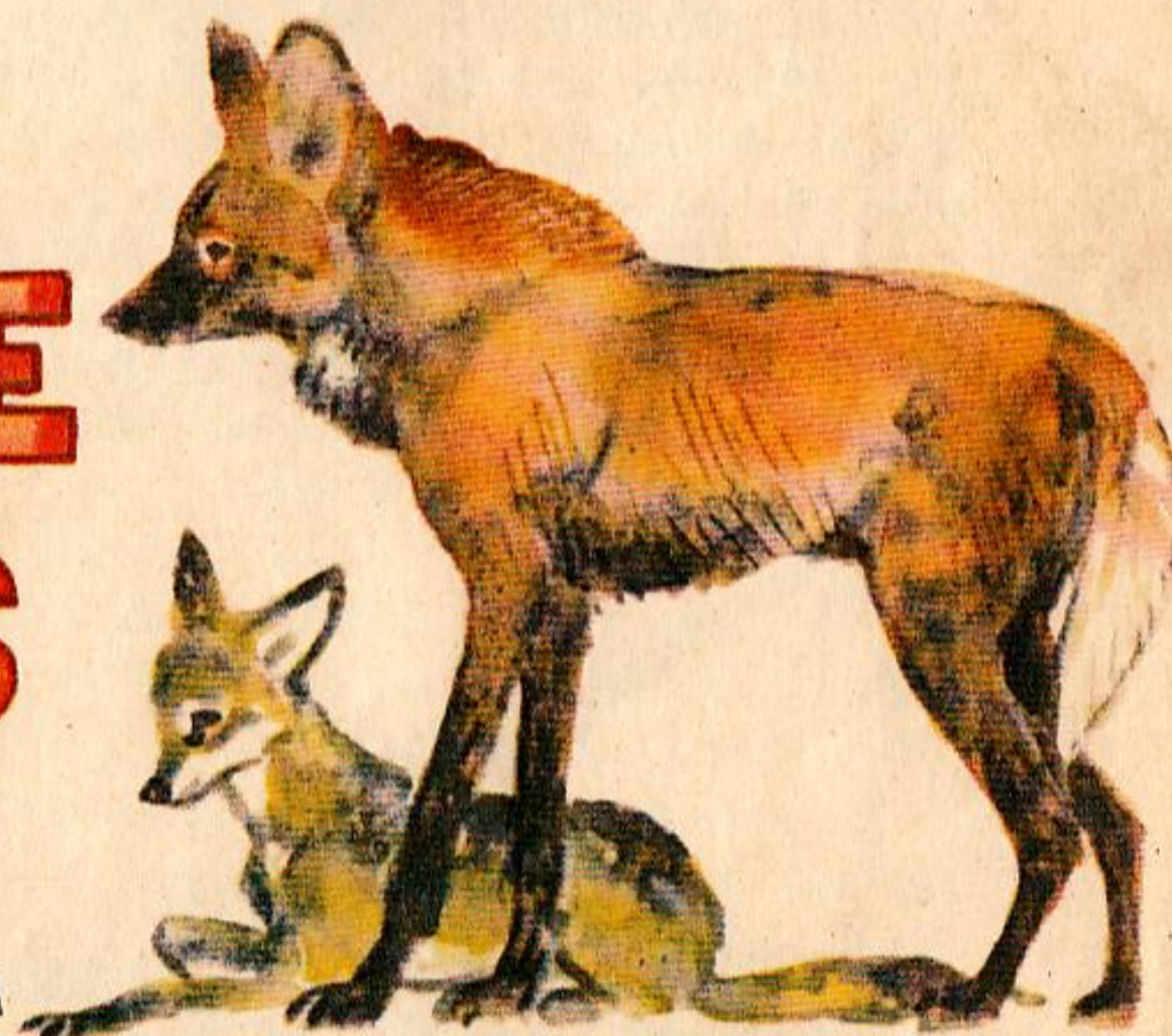
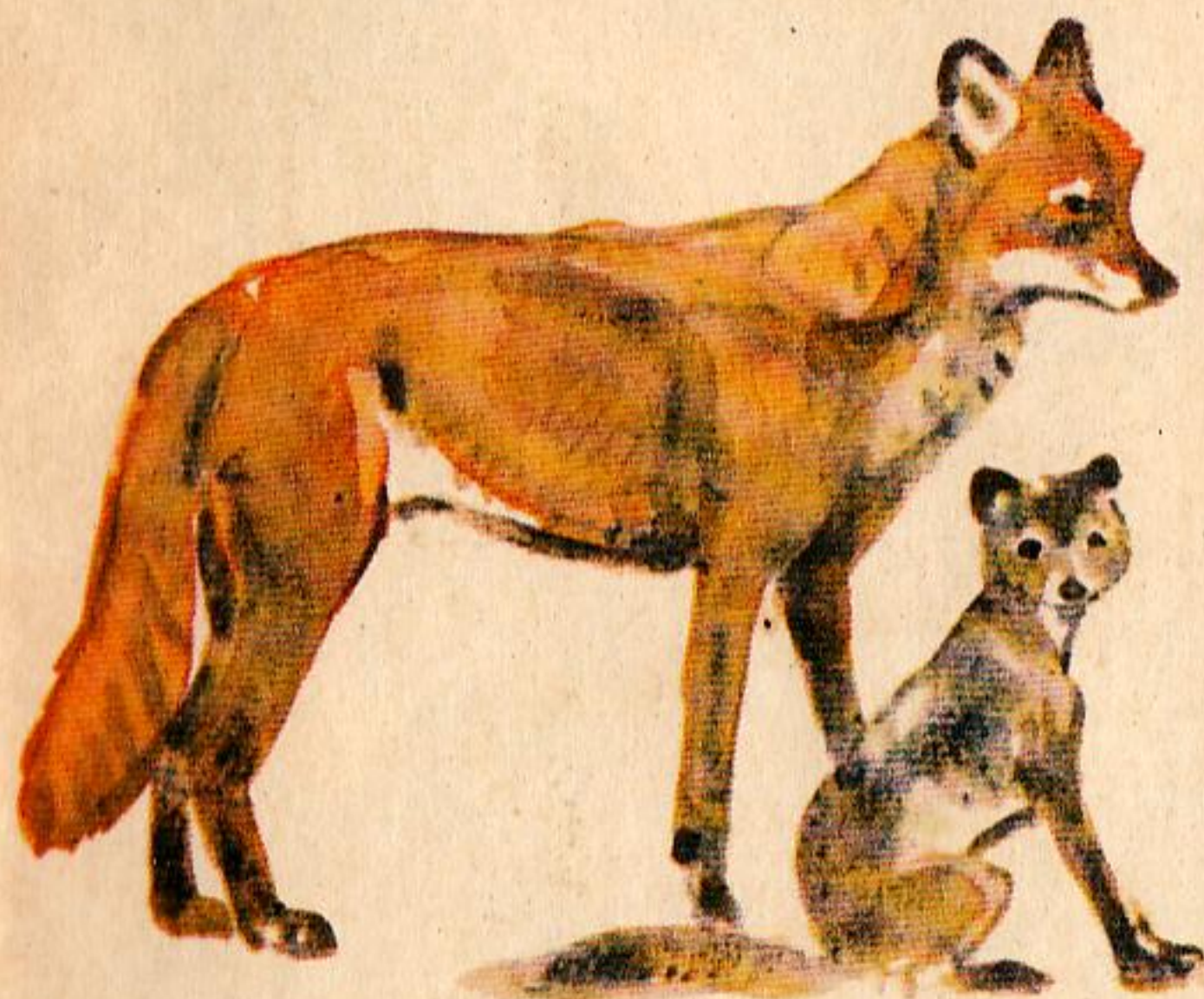




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*Drawings by A. Keleinikov
Translated by E. Yankowskaya*



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Wolves, jackals, and foxes all belong to one family, the family of dogs. They are found on all the continents except Antarctica. They live in the forest and on the steppes, in the mountains and on the plains, in the tundra and in the desert.

The legs of animals in this family are long and well-shaped. The paws have strong, blunt claws. All the animals run fast, some at a speed of 65 kilometers an hour!

The hair is thick and of various shades of gray or red. Some of the animals are striped. One of the African jackals is called the striped jackal. Some of the animals are spotted. The African wild dog has black, white and yellow spots. This is the only wild animal that has hair of three colors.

The smallest animal in the dog family is the fennec. It is like a kitten. The largest is the wolf. Big wolves weigh 80 kilograms. Just imagine that!

This book will tell you about animals that are close relatives of the dog.



THE WOLF

All dogs, large and small, come from the wolf.

The wolf is the strongest animal in the dog family. It can run so fast with a goat or sheep on its shoulder that you can hardly catch up with it even on a good race horse. The wolf has very strong jaws. It can crush large bones easily.

Wolves live not only in forests. They like great plains and fields, too. They usually hunt at night, but where there are no people they hunt in the day as well.

It is very true that the wolf lives by its feet. Sometimes it runs 60 kilometers in a day in search of prey. And not always does it find it, even running that distance. It is not easy for an animal in the wild to find food. For this reason, when a wolf makes a good kill, it gorges itself. It can eat 10 kilograms of meat.

But a wolf can also starve. Sometimes it has nothing to eat for a whole week, and it stands it. Once a wolf hid from hunters in a safe spot and went without eating for 17 days!

In autumn and winter wolves gather in packs. In spring they break up into pairs. Somewhere among the roots of a fallen tree or in a den the mother wolf has five, six, or seven cubs, even ten at times, but sometimes only two. She does not leave the den. The father wolf takes good care of her. He always feeds her, even if there is nothing left for him.

By the end of the summer the cubs are big enough to go hunting with their parents.





THE COMMON JACKAL



The jackal is not a savage animal though it looks like a wolf, except that it is only half the size of a wolf.

In the Soviet Union jackals live only in the Caucasus Mountains and Central Asia, where it is warm. They cannot stand the cold.

But in hot countries like Turkey, India, or Iran there are many jackals. People do not like them because they are terrible thieves.

Jackals have taken to living near villages and towns. They watch to see what no one is guarding, and at the first chance they steal it. They steal hens from a coop. If watermelons are ripe in the field, they gnaw at them. If corn is ripe, they are quick to steal some cobs. In vineyards they eat the sweet grapes with pleasure.

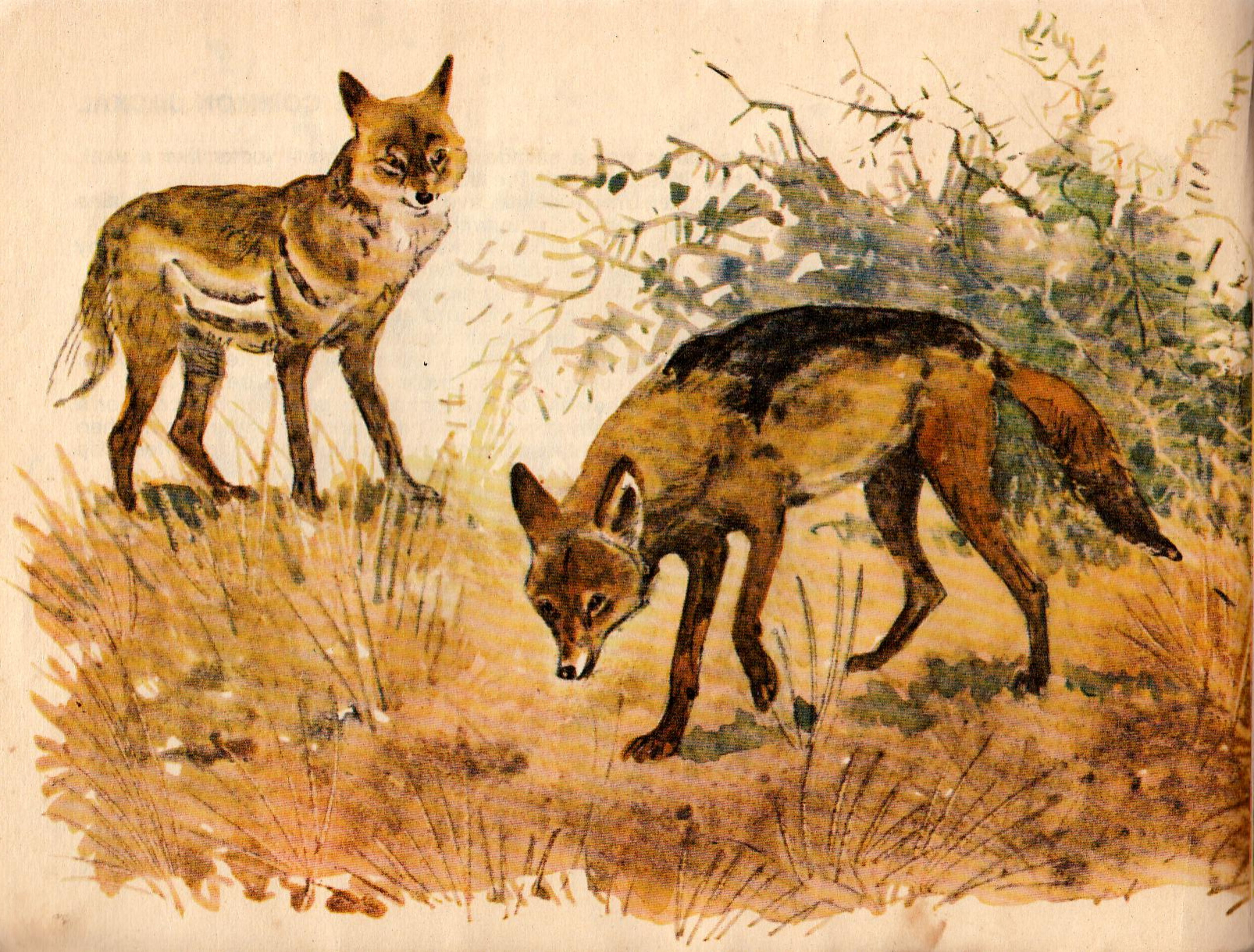
What cunning they show! If a jackal wants to catch a crow or a magpie, it lies down by the road and makes believe it is dead. When the bird sees the jackal, it comes down to pick at the dead flesh. Up jumps the cunning jackal, and that is the end of the bird!

Jackals also like to live along rivers and lakes. But there is nothing to steal there. So they hunt frogs, lizards, and small rodents. They even hunt locusts. They like to eat locusts.

In autumn jackals gather in small packs. Then, feeling brave because of their numbers, they risk attacking goats and sheep.

In spring the mother jackal has her young. She raises them in thick bushes or among the reeds, or sometimes in a burrow left by a badger or porcupine. There are usually three, four, or five cubs, but there may be as many as nine.

The cubs grow fast. They live with their parents only until autumn. The next year they are parents themselves.





THE BLACK-BACKED JACKAL.

This jackal is called black-backed because it has a silvery black back. Otherwise, it is a rusty red.

On the grassy plains of Africa the black-backed jackals live where the lions live. When the lions go hunting, the jackals follow in absolute silence. If a lion kills an antelope or zebra, a weird howling begins. The jackals are cheering the kill.

While the lions feast, the jackals wait patiently to one side. But as soon as the lions finish and stalk off in search of a cool place to lie down, the jackals fall on what remains of the feast. Lions do not touch jackals. They even show a certain contempt for them.

But black-backed jackals are quite good hunters themselves. In packs they attack small antelopes and can cope with a sheep and even a python if it is not very big. They also know how to creep up on flamingos when these birds are peacefully feeding in the shallows of a lake.

Black-backed jackals do their hunting in villages, too, stealing chickens and, in fact, anything good to eat which they can lay their paws on. People do not like this, naturally. They shoot the jackals and make rugs of their beautiful pelts.

There are two other kinds of jackals in Africa. One has light stripes on its sides. This is the only striped animal in the dog family. The other is the Abyssinian red jackal, which has long legs and a narrow muzzle.



THE COYOTE

The coyote is also known as the prairie wolf. Indeed, it is the closest relative of the wolf, only it is the size of a jackal.

The home of the coyote is North America.

Coyotes, like jackals, find it convenient to live near villages, and they behave in the same way. They search refuse heaps for food, and they steal. What is more, at night they give concerts that are not at all musical. They yap, whine, bark, and howl. Nobody can sleep.

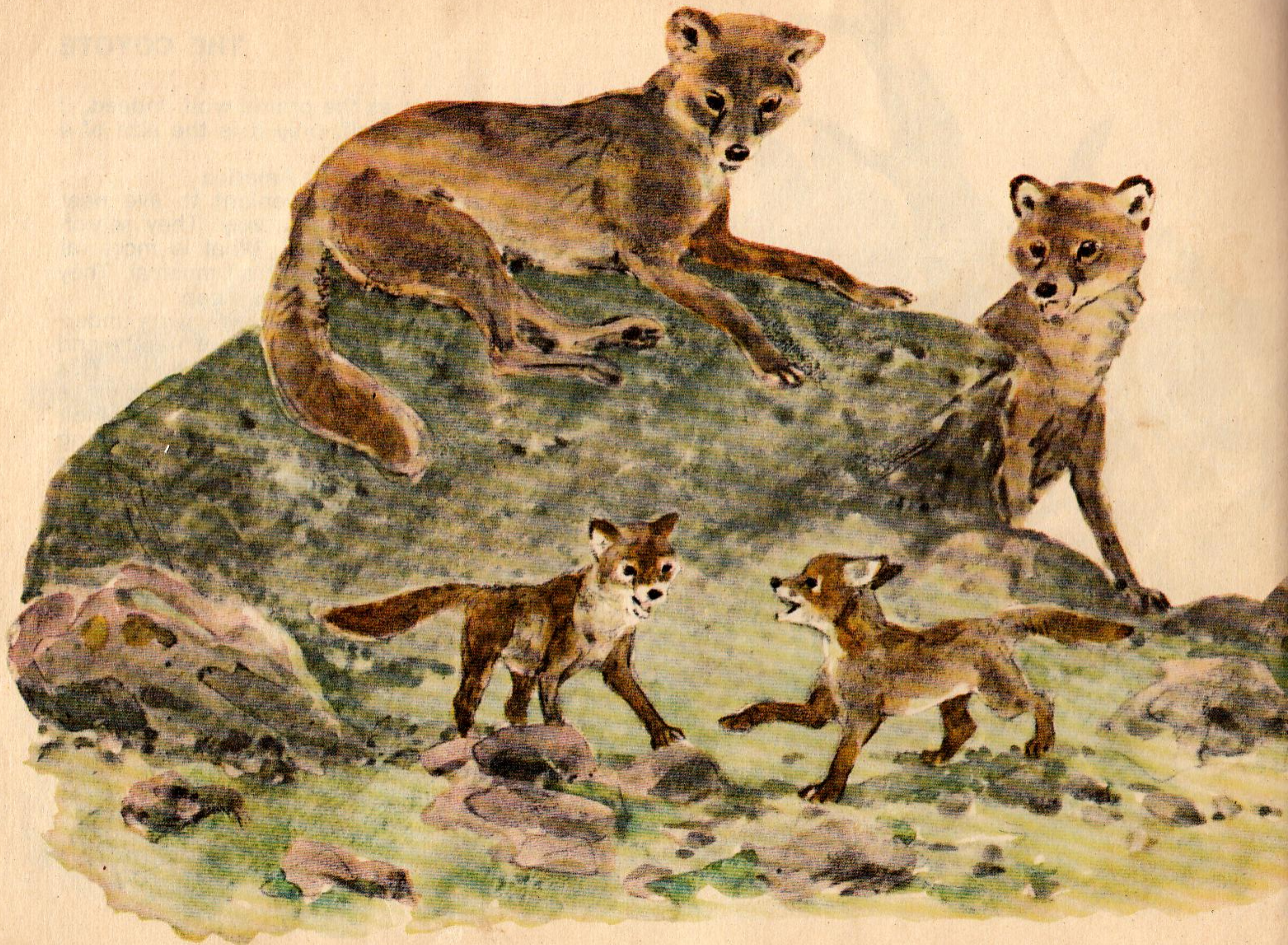
But when coyotes began to disappear, scientists understood that they are useful because they catch rats and other harmful rodents. Coyotes are protected now.

A mother coyote and a father coyote remain together as long as they live. On the steppes they usually have their young in a burrow. But in the woods they do something very strange for the dog family. They find a big tree with a hollow, and even if the hollow is a meter or a meter and a half from the ground, the mother coyote moves into it and prepares to have her young. This is where the father coyote will bring food to her and the pups.

But the most unusual thing happens if there is a shortage of burrows. Two mother coyotes with their pups live together in one burrow, and they get along well, too. If one dies for some reason, the other will look after the pups as if they were her own.

When the pups are two months old, the parents teach them to catch mice, rabbits, birds, and frogs. By the end of summer studies are over. Now the young coyotes start independent lives. Each one goes its own way, sometimes wandering more than 100 kilometers from the place where it was born.





THE ARCTIC FOX

It is hard to find a more adventurous polar explorer than the Arctic fox. It lives on the barren northern plains of Asia, Europe, and North America, and from there it wanders still farther north to the icy Arctic regions. In winter the Arctic fox is white. It is hard to see it in the snow. Some, though, have a winter fur that is a bluish gray, or grayish brown, or even black. These are known as blue foxes. Their pelts are more expensive in the fur trade.

In summer the Arctic fox is a grizzled brown with lighter fur on its belly. This modest coloring goes well with the shades of the northern plain after the snow has melted.

The Arctic fox loves to dig burrows. It digs one every year. Otherwise, it would have no place to hide in the bitter cold and no place to raise its young. But often it has to make its home behind a boulder or between mounds of earth. It is not always possible to dig a burrow where the ground is stony or swampy.

The mother fox sometimes has more than ten cubs. It would not be easy for her to feed and rear them if the father fox were not a good father. He brings food. If an enemy approaches the burrow, he defends his family in every way he can. He yaps and tries to distract the enemy by moving away from the burrow.

The Arctic fox roams about the plain at night and in the day, too. It catches such northern rodents as lemmings, mice, and hares. It eats fish if it can catch them. It trails after the polar bear the way the jackal trails after the lion, waiting to eat the remains of a kill.

If the Arctic fox has more food than it needs, it buries it and then packs down the earth with its muzzle so that no one can guess that anything has been hidden. The fox does not forget where the food is stored. It will come later and eat it.





THE COMMON RED FOX

It used to be said that a fox can fool seven wolves. This is not true. There are many tales about the cunning fox, but the wolf is more cunning and more intelligent, too.

The common red fox feeds mainly on barn and field mice. It is a master at catching these rodents that do so much damage to farms. It can catch as many as 50 in one day.

Only when there are few mice does a fox hunt wood grouse, hares, and hazel grouse. It may even attack a young roe deer. It will eat almost anything, in fact: grasshoppers, June beetles, lizards, earthworms, snails. It is very fond of bilberries, raspberries, grapes, and plums.

The fox never hunts just to kill. It avoids quarreling when there is no need. It may move into the burrow of a badger and live with the badger. A burrow has dozens of entries and exits, and there is plenty of room for other animals, too. Sometimes polecats, wildcats, barn owls, and otters all live together peacefully.

The red fox is certainly not a capricious animal. It can live on barren plains, in mountains, in forests, and in deserts. It can even live in the parks of large cities! It is known everywhere, in Europe, Asia, North America, and North Africa.

Have you ever seen fox cubs?

They are tiny, no bigger than a mole. They are covered with a grizzled-brown fur. The mother fox feeds them with nothing but milk for a whole month. Then they crawl out of the burrow and play at the entrance. They are gay little animals. The father fox brings them food. But he does not come right to the burrow. He leaves the food nearby. The mother fox will find it and give it to the cubs.

It is surprising how fast the parents teach the cubs to hunt when they are a little stronger. In about two weeks! And young foxes soon leave their parents.





THE RACCOON DOG

The racoon dog is short-legged and shaggy, like the badger. It has side whiskers, like the lynx. It sleeps all winter, like the bear.

In the Far East, where it comes from, it is called the Usuriisk racoon. But it should be called the racoon dog.

Soviet zoologists decided to move the racoon dog to places farther west. Now we find it near Moscow, in the Ukraine republic and in the Baltic republics. From there it has moved on to Poland and Finland. The racoon dog does not like to stay in one place. Trotting slowly, it can travel very far. It likes thick bushes along rivers and lakes and light groves.

The racoon dog eats mice, frogs, lizards, fish, insects, and birds. It destroys many birds' nests, sad to say. It also eats berries and fruit.

The racoon dog can dig burrows as fast and as well as a badger. But in its new homeland, in Europe, it does not waste time on this. If it finds a suitable crevice among the rocks or the old burrow of another animal, or simply a tiny cave under the roots of a fallen tree, it moves in. Why bother to dig a burrow if it will live there only a short time?

The racoon dog has many pups, at times as many as 19. Both mother and father look after them.

THE BUSH DOG

The bush dog has very short legs but a long body. Its ears are small, and so is its tail. And the muzzle is blunt, as though it had been cut off. It is an odd-looking animal.

The bush dog is only found in South America. It likes to live in thick bushes or in the tangled roots of giant trees in the jungle. Any other animal would get caught, but the bush dog is agile and short-legged, like a coon hound. It can wiggle its way into any crack.

During the day the bush dog sleeps in its burrow. At night it comes out to hunt in packs. It usually hunts South American rodents related to the guinea pig, such as the capibara.

Capibaras are good swimmers. When they are chased, they dash to water and dive in. But they do not always escape. The bush dog can catch capibaras in the water, too.

The bush dog takes its kill to where it has left its pups. The pups squeal with impatience as they wait.

Deep in the forest grown bush dogs squeal like pups when they talk to each other. But if any one of them sees an enemy, it growls and spits like a cat, to warn of danger.

You rarely see a bush dog in a zoo anywhere in the world. It is a capricious animal. It cannot live long in conditions that it is not used to.







THE MANED WOLF

Now we are going to meet the wild dog with the longest legs. It lives in South America, on plains where there are bushes and small woods.

The maned wolf is a handsome animal. It is rusty red with a white spot on its throat, and it seems to be wearing long black stockings. On its neck and back it has a small black mane. Its muzzle is like that of a fox. And in many ways it acts like a fox. In South America it is called Big Fox.

The maned wolf is the tallest animal in the dog family. It stands nearly one meter high. But it is not the strongest and heaviest. It weighs only about 20 kilograms. Where the maned wolf lives, the people think that it attacks calves and colts, so they kill it. Now there are few maned wolves. But people should not kill this wolf. It does no harm. It is timid and hunts at night alone. It races across the plain, snapping up a lizard, frog, or rodent, enjoying a banana, or gnawing at nuts or sugar cane. To get a mouse out of a hole it tears at the ground with its teeth, not with its front paws as dogs usually do.

Though the maned wolf has long legs, it cannot run far. It gets tired. A good horse can catch up with it quickly. But you should see it jump! From a standing position it leaps high over a tall bush and disappears in the woods. This is usually the way it escapes from hunters.

The mother wolf has only two or three cubs, once in a while five. The cubs are black and have short legs. They live with their mother until they are as tall as she is.



THE WILD DOG OF AFRICA

There are no wolves in Africa, but the wild dogs can be called the wolves of Africa. Their habits are similar. They hunt in packs. At times the packs are small, but sometimes there are hundreds of wild dogs in them. Barking with excitement, they race across the plains in a cloud of dust, following their prey at 60 kilometers an hour. Usually it takes no more than five minutes to run down an antelope or zebra.

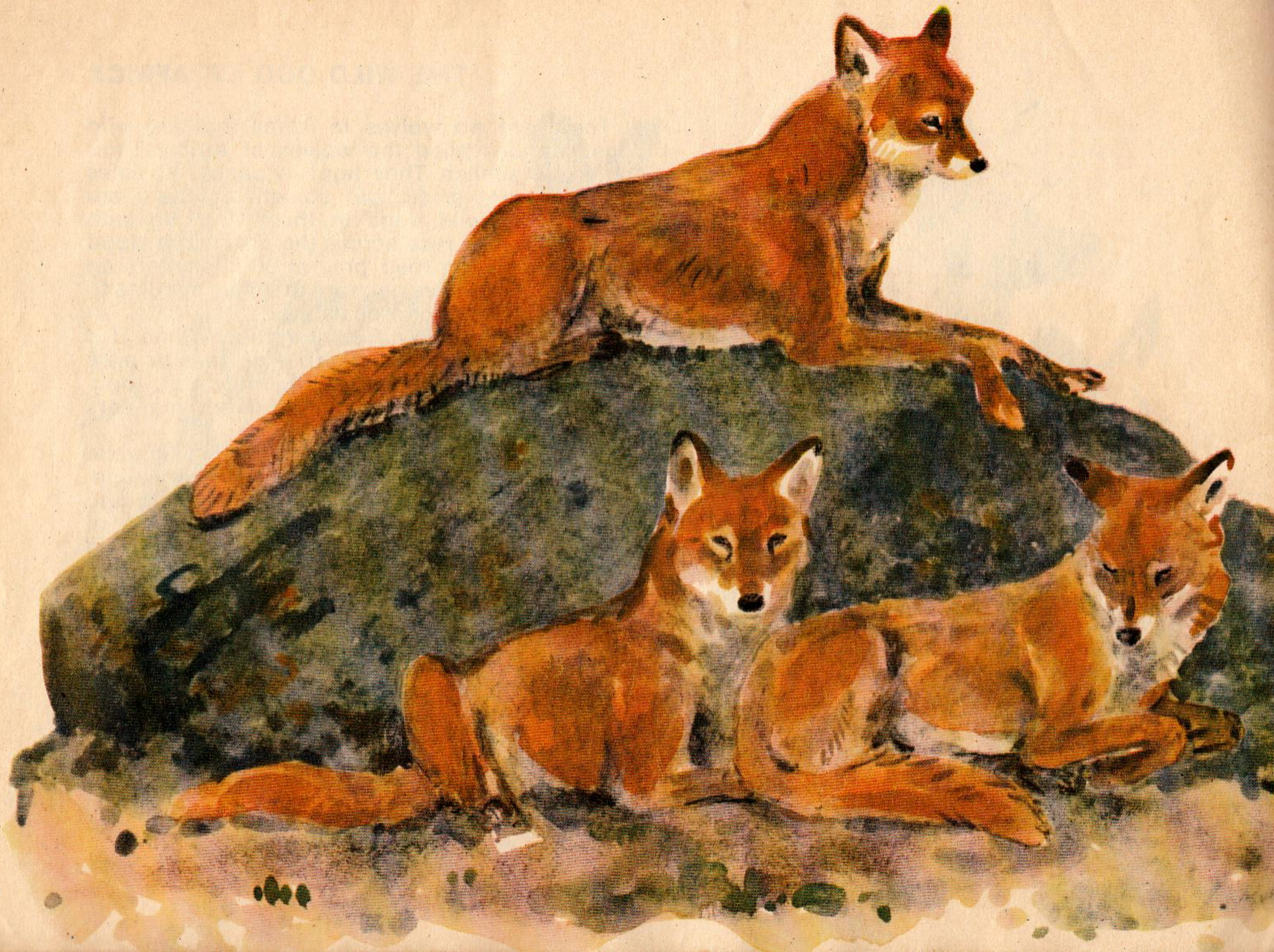
The wild dogs do not hunt in the daytime. It is too hot. They sleep in the shade of trees or play. But in the evening or morning they trot, long, blunt muzzles close to the ground, sniffing, ears pricked, listening.

At such a time it is better for a small gazelle to stay out of the way. And for a big antelope, too, though the antelope has horns as sharp and long as javelins, and many a lion is afraid of them. The lion, too, keeps away from the wild dogs when they are very hungry. They could tear it to pieces, especially if it is old or very young.

The wild dogs divide their duties. Some hunt, while others stay around the dens and protect the pups. The hunting dogs bring meat for the pups and their nurses.

The wild dog of Africa is the only spotted member of the family of dogs. The spots are black, yellow, and white. Each dog has its own pattern. There are no two alike.





THE RED WOLF

Do you remember how Mowgli helped his friends, the gray wolves, to overcome the red wolves?

The red wolves are also called red dogs. Different peoples call them by different names. The red wolves live in some of the mountains of Siberia, the Pamirs, the Tyan-Shan Mountains, China, India, and on the islands of Java and Sumatra. The red wolves do not run as fast as the African wild dog. They get their food not in a fast chase but by following goats, wild boars, deer, or wild rams for hours at a time. When these animals finally tire, the pack of red wolves closes in on them.

It is said that even a tiger has a tough time if it meets a pack of red wolves.

When the Himalayan bear sniffs the red wolf in the wind, it takes off at top speed. If the smell is very strong, the red wolf must be near. Then the bear scrambles up a tree.

No animal except the elephant can save itself, if alone, from the savagery of the red wolves.

The red wolf never attacks people. It does not come close to villages and never touches livestock.

It is a rare animal. In the Soviet Union no one is allowed to kill it.



THE CORSAC

Any one seeing the corsac for the first time is sure to say, "What a tiny fox!"

Yes, the corsac looks like a small fox. But some scientists think that the corsac is a closer relative of the Arctic fox than of the common red fox.

The corsac is an Asian animal. In the Soviet Union it is found only in the south-east, from the Lower Volga Region to just east of Lake Baikal. But long ago corsacs were well known in European Russia. They were kept as house pets instead of dogs.

If tamed, they are very amusing animals. They are affectionate and trusting with their owners and like to play. They are very agile, too. They can even climb bushes and trees. But, most important, they do much good. They destroy rats. This means a lot because not every cat can cope with a rat.

In the wild the corsac is quite different. It is cautious. It tries not to show itself in the daytime. It stays in its burrow.

But it almost never digs a burrow. Why should it? It can always find an empty burrow of a badger, red fox, or marmot.

The corsac, like the coyote, sometimes has trouble finding a home. At times two mother corsacs with their young crowd together in one burrow. It is not so bad if each mother has only two cubs. But if each one has eleven? This happens, too. But no one has ever heard of the two families not getting along together.

Once the cubs get a little bigger, they do not stay with their parents long. They leave them in the autumn.



THE FENNEC

The fennec is the smallest wild relative of the dog but has the biggest ears. It is as small as a kitten, but its ears would be suitable for a big sheep dog.

These charming animals live in the hottest place on earth, the Sahara.

All day long the fennecs have to hide from the blistering sun in deep and cool burrows. Only toward evening do they all crawl out at once and sit quietly near their burrows, waiting for the day to cool off. If the sun still burns, they lie down and cover their heads with their bushy tails, as though the tails were umbrellas.

At long last it is pleasantly cool. The fennec suddenly stiffens its big ears. It has heard something! It creeps to where a lizard may have rustled across the sand or a locust may have jumped. A desert lark may have stirred in its sleep. Imagine how little noise that would make! But the fennec hears everything. It knows exactly where the bird is hiding. It creeps forward again like a shadow, stops, and leaps. There! It has its victim in its teeth.

Where there is a river or a small lake, fennecs gather at night to drink. Some come from far off. All want to drink. But a fennec can live for many days without water if it has to.

Early in the African spring the fennec has its tiny pups.



THE BIG-EARED FOX

There are no fennecs in Southern Africa. But another animal there can boast of large ears and a sharp sense of hearing. This is the big-eared fox. Its ears are nearly as long as those of the fennec. But it is twice the size of the fennec.

What is striking about this animal is not the ears but the teeth. It has 50 teeth! No other land animal has so many teeth except the banded anteater of Australia, whose many tiny teeth can grate termites, ants, and other insects.

Like the banded anteater, the big-eared fox destroys many insects. But it also hunts mice, lizards, and birds. Sometimes it eats berries and other fruit.

The big-eared fox is timid. You can rarely see it in the daytime. It hides in burrows, thick bushes, or among the rocks of cliffs. It hunts at night.

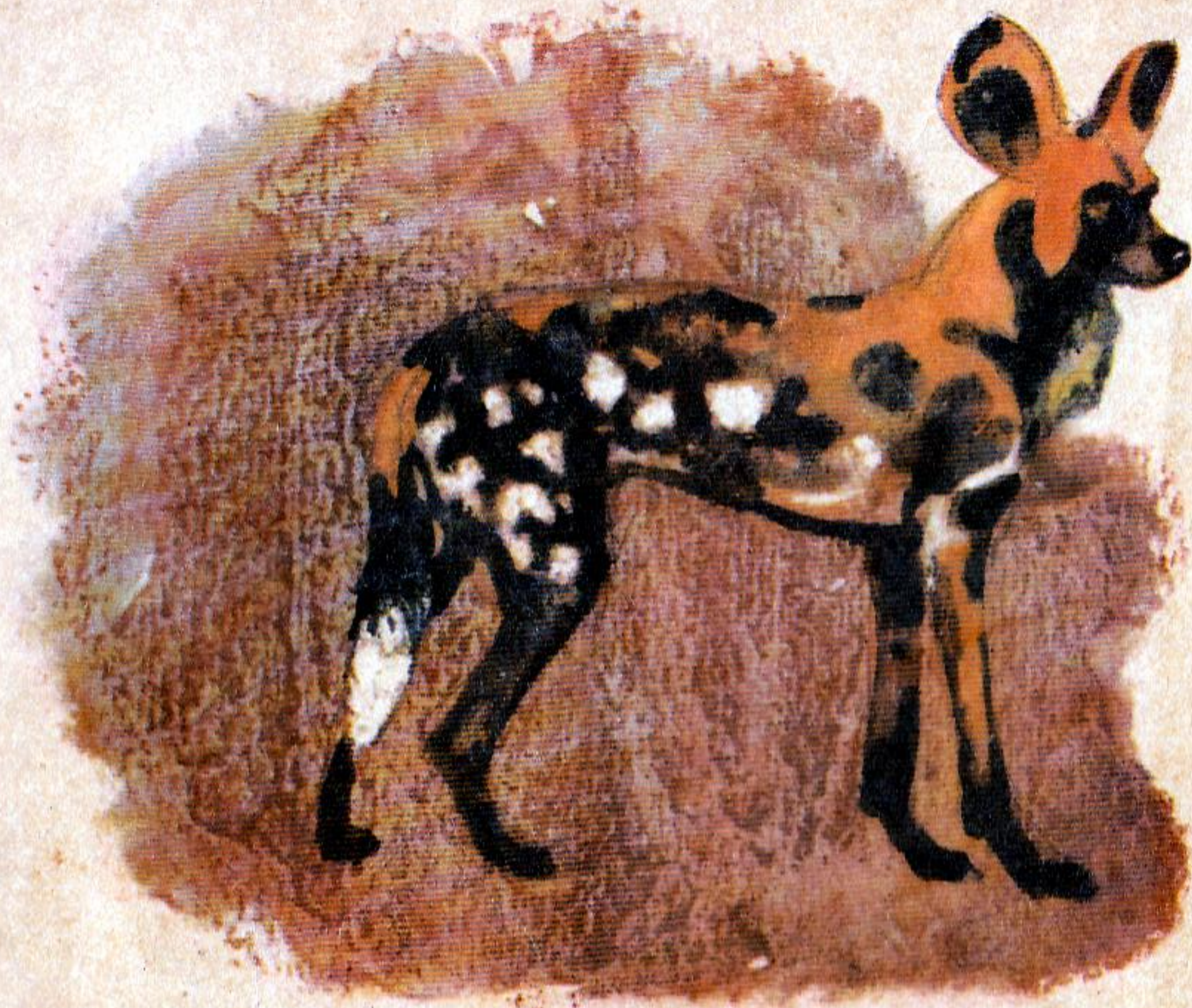
Big-eared foxes never get together in packs. They are either alone or in pairs.

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You have learned from this book about 14 members of the dog family. These are the dog's best-known relatives. In all, the dog family has 35 members. When you get bigger, you will read about them in special books on animals.







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Drawings by **A. Keleinikov**

Translated by **Eleanor Yankowskaya**

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